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# CONCERNMENT,

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In what Cases the difference of mens Judgements, and OPinions in matters of Religion, is not to be restrained but tolerated by the Civill power.

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# TWELVE WEIGHTIE QUERIES OF Great Concernment,

## Shewing in what cases the difference of mens Judgments, and opinions in matters of Religion is not to be restrained, but tolerated by the Civill power.

IN what Cases the difference of mens Judgements, and opinions in matters of Religion is not to be restrained, but to lerated by the Civill power. Declared in certaine Queries; unto which, that satisfaction may be given in away, of cleere reason and demonstration, in stead of prohibition and punishment, is the earnest desire of all ingenuous men and particularly of those, who in aconfiden texpectation hereof, have with all faithfulnesse adhered to the *Parliament*, and stood up for their defence in time of their greatest danger and extremitie to the almost, if not altogether ruining of themselves, their Estates and Families, and who can never be discouraged or with-drawne from their former activitie, or readie affections to the *Parliament*, by any thing so much as to be required with an unnaturall, and unthankfull oppression in their Consciences.

Some things premised, that are plaine in themselves, and necessarie in the first place to be stated, in order to the better clearing the ensuing Queries.

1. That the knowledge which any man hath of God, or capacitie rightly to judge and understand his will; is the free gift of God, is that which man is the receiver of from God, and not the Author of in himselfe, *Rom.* 11.

*who hath knowne the mind of the Lord at any time? who hath given unto him &c.*

2. That the way, by which God gives, and conveighes this knowledge of himselfe, and of his will unto man, is by planting within man, two fundamentall principles of light and illumination: by the one of which he becomes a naturall man, and beares the image of the earthly man, *the first Adam, who was made a living soule:* and by the other of these he becomes a spirituall man, and beares the Image of the heavenly man, the *second Adam who was made a quickning Spirit*, 1 *Cor.* 15.

3. These two fundamentall principles, planted in man, are given him by God for the Law, and rule to teach, and guide him in the knowledge of God, and to enable him, rightly to judge and discerne the will, and mind of God, in that which man is to thinke, speake, or doe: these two Lawes in this sense, are mentioned in *Rom.* 7. and 8. chap. *the one is the Law of nature or of workes; the other the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, *Rom.* 8. 3. and what the one could not doe in man, or to man, in that it was weake through the flesh; that the other did, and doth accomplish in man, and for man, through the quickning power of the eternall Spirit.

4. These two Lawes, or inward principles planted in man, are in themselves holy, righteous, spirituall, good, and perfect; and did evidently manifest themselves so to be, by their operations in the persons of the first and of the second *Adam*; and the weakenesse and deficiencie of the first was not in it selfe, but onely in relation to the subject wherein it wrought; It was weake through the flesh, the state in which man was created and subjected to this Law was fraile, and subject to change, but the Law it selfe was without exception under it, and by it was man made perfect in himselfe, *but they have sought out many inventions, Ecclesiastes 7. 29.*

5. These

V. These two Laws, are still the two fundamentall principles, which are given, and continued by God in the hearts of men for their rule to guide, and teach them, in the knowledge of himself and of his will, *Rom.*2.13,14,15.25 26,29. so, *Gal.*4.21,22,23,24. according to the renewed operations of both, or either of which, in man since the fall, he hath a capacity or power begotten in him, more or lesse clearely to know God, and rightly to judge and discern of his will, and to make use of the Scriptures, and all meanes conducing thereunto; and otherwise then by this, man since his fall, is in himselfe, unto all knowledge of God and to every good work, reprobate, *Tit.*1.16.

These things thus premised,

First Quære, Whether, when it pleases God to renew the working and illuminations of both, or either of these principles, in any man, it be not most reasonable, lawfull, and necessary, that he should submit unto the same, and follow the dictates, and light thereof, according to the measure, and manner, which God is pleased to dispence them unto him; and whether it be not unreasonable, unlawfull, and notoriously sinfull in any man to act contrary to, or differing from the cleer evidence, full perswasion, and light of both, or either of these principles within him, upon any command whatsoever from man, or any outward pretence whatsoever, *Rom.*14.22,23.

Second Quære, Whilest men doe carefully observe the inward Teachings, Dictates, and Operations, of both or either, of these principles, whether may they not be said to hold fundamentalls of the knowledge of God, and whether for the measures of illumination, (which for the present they have received) though in the smallest and

weakeſt degree, waiting, and earneſtly inquiring after more. Are they to be judged, upbraided, cenſured, blamed, or much leſſe puniſhed, or put to death by others, who take themſelves to be much more learned, and to have received in farre more abundance then they, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. for who maketh thee to differ from another, or what haſt thou that thou haſt not received? Now if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory as if thou hadſt not received it?

Third Quære, Whether thoſe meaſures of illumination and knowledge of God, and of his will, which are communicated to men, onely by the light of nature, which for the preſent they have, and whilſt they know no better, may not be profeſſed in word, and practiſed in actions, ſo farre as they ure ſutable, and agreeable to the law of Nature? and this though Nature doe teach and diſperſe ſeverall degrees of this knowledge, and in different wayes of expreſſion, unto ſome more, unto ſome leſſe, as in daily experience we ſee is done.

Fourth Quære, Whether ſuch men, faithfully obeying this inward principle, of the light of Nature, in the cleer illuminations and operations thereof, and diligently improving all means, which they meet with for the increaſe of their knowledge; but yet for the preſent remaining altogether ignorant, and unacquainted with the ſupernaturall principle, the Law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt (which by the ſtrength of nature is not attaineable, but onely by the free gift and almighty power of God) whether may not ſuch men freely confeſſe their want of this knowledge, and the difficulties they finde in themſelves to ſubmit to it: and whether they may not by argument, debate, and diſpute, endevour to receive ſatisfaction, from any that is pro-

probable to give it them, and if this liberty be not permitted, is not the moſt proper and ingenuous meanes of their own conviction, and of finding out the truth denyed unto them?

Fifth Quære, Whether thoſe meaſures of illumination and knowledge of God, and of his will, communicated unto men by the quickning Spirit of Chriſt, or by a ſupernaturall light, which for the preſent they have received, and yet in much diverſity, and whilſt they know no more, may not be profeſſed, in ſuch expreſſions or words, and practiſed in ſuch outward formes or actions, as are agreeable to the Scriptures, and which no expreſſe Text of Scripture contradicts; and whether they may not be freely argued, debated, diſputed amongſt others differing from them; in order to finde out the full truth? and whether, if this be not permitted and tollerated, are not men reſtrained from that confeſſion, and teſtimony, which God requires of their outward man, to beare unto the truth? and are they not denied a proper meanes appointed by God for growing in the grace and knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, even the mutuall imparting of their ſeverall gifts one unto another?

Sixt Quære, Whether difference of opinion and judgement, in the things of God, and matters of Religion, doe not neceſſarily ariſe and ſpring up in men, from thoſe diverſity of gifts, or different meaſures of illuminations, from thoſe various adminiſtrations, which one and the ſelf-ſame ſpirit divideth to every one, as pleaſeth him, for the profit of the whole body, 1 *Cor.* 12. and whether it will not from hence inevitably follow, that it is impoſſible to ſuppreſſe the differences of judgements, and opinions amongſt

men, in matters of Religion, but by suppressing the Spirit of God himself, and limitting the holy One of *Israel*, in his wise dispensations, and free operations? and are we stronger then He? 1 *Cor.*10. 22.

Seventh Quære, Whether the body of Christ, doth not consist of many members, and those variously differing, in judgement and opinion, according to the diversity of gifts, and measures of knowledge they have received, some having the place of the eye, others of the hand, others of the feet, and others which seem to be more feeble? 1 *Cor.* 12. and whether there be not a law which knits and binds these many members in unity of spirit, notwithstanding their bodily or appearing difference, even the royall Law of love, spoken of in *James*, and described in the 1 *Cor.* 13. a spirit in them, in the midst of the difference among them; which suffers long, which is kind, which envies not, which vaunts not it self, which is not puffed up, which behaves not it self unseemly, which seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evill, which rejoyceth not in iniquity, but in the truth, which beareth all things, which beleeveth all things, hopeth all things, indureth all things, This is my Commandement that you love one another as I have loved you, *Joh.* 15.

Eight Quære, whether the contrary spirit to this, in those that professe themselves to be Christians, and members of Christs body, be not that murtherous spirit of *Caine*; forbidden by the 6 Commandement, according to Christs exposition thereupon *Matth.* 5. under the expression, of being angry with our brother without a cause; the instance whereof is there given, in judging and upbraiping one another, for the wants and defects either of natu-

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rall or ſupernaturall light; ſaying to our brother *Racha*, or thou foole, and whether it be not, that hatred againſt our brother, ſo much condemned in theſe, and the like places of Scripture. Let every one be ſwift to heare, ſlow to ſpeake, and ſlow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſſe of God, *Iames* 1.19,20. hee that ſaith, he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkeneſſe even untill now, 1 *Iohn* 2.9. In this the children of God, are made manifeſt from the children of the Devill. Whoſoever doth not righteouſneſſe, is not of God; nor he that hateth his brother, 1 *Iohn* 2.10. If a man ſay I love God, and hate his brother, he is a lyar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath ſeene; how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeene? *Iohn* 4. but why doſt thou judge thy brother? or why doſt thou ſet at naught thy brother? we ſhall all ſtand before the judgement ſeat of Chriſt.

Ninth Quære, whether difference of judgement or opinion, either in naturall, or in ſpirituall men; profeſſed and practiſed according to the above-ſaid limitations, be not the juſt and lawfull liberty, which is due to every ſpirituall man, as he is a Chriſtian; and to every naturall man, as he is a reaſonable man. And whether this ought to be forbidden or reſtrayned by the power of man, or can be without manifeſt tyranny and oppreſſion and fighting againſt God: whether ſuch a tolleration as this, be not according to the will of Chriſt, and for the profit of the whole body of Chriſt; and more juſtifiable by the word of God, then that unity of judgement and uniformity of practice in matters of Religion, which is ſubmitted unto upon grounds of feare, or implicit faith; and practiſed onely or chiefly in conformity to that power of man, that Commands and injoynes the ſame.

Tenth

Tenth Quære, whether ſuch a tolleration, practiſed in a ſpirit of love, and meekneſſe, one towards another, with inquiſitive mindes after truth, and faithfull hearts to that Government; under whoſe protection, men may be permitted to live in all godlineſſe and honeſty, according to the principles of nature, and of grace, may not conſiſt with the unity, peace, ſafety, and proſperity of any ſtate, or nation, under what forme of civill Government ſoever: and whether it be not the moſt likely meanes to preſerve that Government whatſoever it be, from change or hazard. The Intereſt of conſciences amongſt all being hereby gratified, which is of neereſt concernment to honeſt and vertuous men; and the ſelfe intereſt of the Clergy weakned and defeated; who, what Church formes ſoever they ſet up, will be ever impoſing their private opinions, in matters of Religion, for infallible truths, and incenſing Prince againſt people, and people againſt Prince; and one ſort of men againſt another, making their followers to eſpouſe, and maintaine their unjuſt quarrels, till they become inſenſibly ſlaves to their ambition, and boundleſſe power, inſtead of attayning to any ſolid, reall, or truly Chriſtian reformation.

Eleventh Quære, whether that wiſedome and power of the Clergy, which hath taken upon it in all ages, to ſuppreſſe Hereſie and Schiſme by humane Laws, and penalties, have not beene a perverting, and interrupting of that Law of love amongſt the members of Chriſts body, which he commands. And whether they under the pretence of compoſing differences, and ſetling a Government over the body of Chriſt; by indeavouring to reduce all the members of the body, to unity of judgement, and uniformity

mity of practiſe, in matters of Religion; upon grounds of outward compulſion, have not diſcovered in themſelves, that true ſpirit of Schiſme deſcribed, 1 *Cor.*12. (which they would ſeeme to extirpate) which deſpiſes all below it, and envies all above it, as unneceſſary members, and fit to be cut off from the body; ſo defacing and dividing the body of Chriſt, by labouring to make the whole body, but one member; and where then is the body?

Twelfe Quære, whether the two principles before mentioned, of ſupernaturall and naturall light, did not both meet together in their perfection in the perſon of Chriſt; and whe her as they are found in him, and doe ſhine forth in the glory of his face, are they not the Kingdome of God within us, *Luke* 17.12. which conſiſts not in word onely, but in power, 1 *Cor.*4.20. by which we are to be abſolutely ſetled, and governed: and unto which we are to be ſubject in all our actions. Whether theſe two principles ſo profeſſed, and practiſed, be not the two witneſſes ſpoken of, *Revel.* 11. that are to propheſie a thouſand, two hundred, and threeſcore dayes in ſackcloath: and during that time to be confined and fettered by the outward formes of mens inventions, ſet up and injoyned as the will and minde of Chriſt, by the power of man for the ſuppreſſing of Blaſphemies, Hereſie, and Schiſme. Whether, at the end of their teſtimony, the laſt enemy they are to conflict with, be not thoſe, who having a forme of godlineſſe, deny the power thereof, 2 *Tim.*3.*ver.*1. to 6. making the Kingdome of God, to conſiſt in word onely, and not in power: being of the ſpirit of that boaſting Iew, 2 *Rom.*17,*&c.* who reſted in the law, who made his boaſts of God, who knew his will, and approved the things

things most excellent, being instructed out of the Law, who was confident of his being a guide to the blinde, a light to them that sate in darknesse; and instructer of the fooliſh; a teacher of babes, having the forme of knowledge, and of the truth in the Law; but notwithstanding all this, his praise was only of men, but not of God; whether by this generation of men (which Christ *Luk.* 21. 32. sayes, were not to passe away till his second comming) must not these witnesses have warre made against them, and be overcome, and slain, and must not their dead bodies lye in the great City *Jerusalem* in forme or in letter, signified by the place where our Lord was crucified, and which in the sense of the Holy Ghost, is accounted *Sodome* and *Egipt*: and whether immediately after, shall not the spirit of God raise them up in that power and glory, which their enemies shall tremble at, and not be able to withstand, whereby the kingdomes of this world, shall become the kingdomes of our Lord Christ, and hee shall Reigne for ever and ever: Even so Lord Jesus, *Amen. Come quickly.*

FINIS.